



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Maryland's Social Services Agency



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release:

March 5, 2009

For more information:

Elyn Jones

410-767-7758

ejones@dhr.state.md.us

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES CELEBRATES NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK APPRECIATION MONTH IN MARCH

BALTIMORE – March is Social Work Appreciation Month and the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) is celebrating with a variety of recognition and appreciation events.

Social workers and case workers at DHR perform a wide range of essential tasks including determining the safety of children; identifying new foster parents, helping facilitate adoption services, and ensuring the well being of elderly residents who live independently. Social workers touch the lives of thousands of vulnerable children and adults in Maryland and across the country.

“It’s a profession in which every single day brings with it the opportunity to change someone’s life for the better,” said DHR Secretary Brenda Donald. “I am proud of our social workers who are dedicated professionals that strive daily to make a positive difference in the lives of others.”

As part of the appreciation month, a social worker of the year will be selected from each of the 24 local departments of social services. Workers will be chosen by their co-workers and supervisors and will be honored at a luncheon to be held on Monday, March 30 at the Belvedere Hotel in downtown Baltimore.

According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), more than 600,000 people in the United States hold social work degrees and work to help people in all stages of life, from children to the elderly, and in all situations from adoption to hospice care. Professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health service providers.

The Department of Veterans Affairs—the largest employer of social workers in the country—employs more than 6,000 social workers to assist veterans and their families with individual and family counseling, client education, end of life planning, substance abuse treatment and crisis intervention.

-- more --

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for social workers is expected to grow twice as fast as any other occupation, especially in gerontology, home healthcare, substance abuse, and private social service agencies.

United States Senator Barbara Mikulski is probably the most notable and influential of Maryland's licensed social workers.

#

The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state's social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary case, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also funds programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland's fourth largest state agency.